



Gathered Fragments

Publication of The Catholic
Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania



Vol. IV, No. 1

Winter, 1992

"THE CREDITOR AND THE SAINT"

The decade of the 1840's was one of phenomenal growth of Catholicism in Western Pennsylvania. Stories abound about these early years. The following story about Old St. Philomena's Parish, founded by (Bishop, Saint) John N. Neumann, is one of these. Submitted by Msgr. Francis Glenn.

One incident of those building days shows the shrewdness of Neumann. A parishioner of St. Philomena's who had loaned a large sum of money to the Fathers suddenly became alarmed about his investment when rumors were circulated that it was not safe. Hurrying to the rectory, he demanded his money. The brother porter at the door hastened with the dread news to the almost bankrupt superior. A crisis it was indeed, for the news of failure to pay the loan promptly would have created a run on the rectory by others who had made loans, and this would have brought financial ruin. Neumann was equal to the occasion. With a blank smile he inquired of the creditor, "Do you wish your money in gold or silver?" "Oh, if that's the case," said the lender, "you can keep it, for it will be safe with you." And the depositor went away contented.

Little by little the large and stately Gothic Church of St. Philomena went towering into the sky. How the building operations were continued in the face of discouraging economic conditions was a mystery. Clever management of the finances by the pastor promoted the construction under difficulties that would

have dismayed many another, and Bishop O'Connor used to say in after years that Father Neumann had built a church without money.

It was a jubilant occasion for the parish when the great structure of St. Philomena's was dedicated in November, 1846. The Catholics marched in public procession from St. Paul's Church to the new building. Bishop Richard Whelan came up from Wheeling. The Mayor of Pittsburgh was on hand despite the anti-Catholic sentiment of the times. With every seat in the church occupied and all the available space in the aisles filled and even a crowd outside who could not gain admittance, the happiness of the faithful beamed in their faces as O'Connor dedicated the sacred edifice.

Although the church was completed, there remained another construction task for Neumann—the erection of a suitable rectory. Difficulties confronted the rector, but with a vim he continued at his building program in 1846. Before his three-year term of office was finished, the rectory was well on its way to completion.

Still more important than the brick and mortar advance was the energy infused by the new superior into the spiritual life of the parish. Here he had an opportunity to bring into play his ideas for saving the faith of the newcomers to American shores. They liked societies, so he supplied them. Pious associations,—the Confraternity of the

Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary, the Confraternity of the Rosary,--were established and developed with vigor, with fixed hours for their meetings, special prayers, and sermons adapted to the needs of the members. These societies were of untold value in knitting the parish together, welding what was once a disjointed group of Catholics into a united congregation.

ET TRIVIUM

Our Lady of the Alleghenies Shrine is located in Loretto, Pennsylvania.

Pittsburgh was originally placed under the Diocese of Paris, France.

Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin, who was born into nobility in Czarist Russia, was sent originally to the United States in 1792 to study the new American political systems, but instead found his own priestly vocation, later establishing Loretto, Pennsylvania. Father Gallitzin is known as the Apostle of the Alleghenies.

Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh resigned his episcopacy in 1860 to enter the Society of Jesus.

Bishop Michael Domenec of Pittsburgh was a Spainard by birth. Bishop Domenec's episcopacy was from 1860 to 1877.

Anthony P. Joseph, Jr.

Do you have trivia you would like to share? Write to Anthony, 921 Norwich Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15226.

ROSEALIA

On December 8 the one hundredth anniversary of Rosealia Foundling Home and Hospital was celebrated. Bishop Wuerl presided at a Mass at St. Paul Cathedral at one o'clock. A reception and tours of the nearby Rosealia Center on Clyde Street followed. There were displays of pictures and artifacts illustrating one hundred years of service to pregnant women and their babies.

Sister Helen Hart, SC, worked for a number of years at Rosealia Hospital. Her MSSW thesis contains the best historical information on the early years of Rosealia. She consulted hospital records as well as the memories of the founding sisters who staffed the hospital. Some of the facts of life at the turn of the century would shock many people today. Where today an infant mortality rate of more than one percent is considered a scandal, in the 1890's an infant mortality rate of eleven percent was the norm. At institutions, the rate was often as high as thirty-five percent. The older sisters consulted by Sister Helen did not attribute the decline in infant mortality over the years to any advance in medicine or nursing. They credited the invention of the refrigerator.

Adoption was not a major part of the Rosealia program through the first forty years. Despite the social stigma of the times, nearly all children went home with their mothers or other close relatives. In this respect the contemporary situation is more or less the same. Today, most of the clients served by Rosealia Center keep their babies. The Center provides a wide range of services designed to enable them to do so.

By Rev. Joseph Scheib

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the University of Notre Dame, the American Society of Church History and the American Catholic Historical Association will sponsor a conference on the History of Christianity on March 26-28, 1992, at the University of Notre Dame.

The conference presentations will explore such themes as religion and the intellectual life, religion and higher education, women and higher education, religion and science, and a history of evangelization in North or South American since 1492.

For additional information:

Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism, 614 Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 16556
(219) 239-5441.

† † † † † † †

Synod Hall Lectures: Sunday, March 8, 2:30; Timothy Kelly, Ph.D. Dr. Kelly's thesis was concerned with the lay experience of the Second Vatican Council. His talk with slides at Synod Hall is titled, "Pageants and Parades, Popular Public Catholic Rituals." Other general meetings are scheduled for April 26 and October 11.

The Annual Lambing Lecture will be held on Sunday, April 26th. Program will begin at 2:30 PM in Synod Hall, 125 N. Craig Street, Oakland. Speaker will be announced.

SESQUICENTENNIAL NEWS

THE FIRST EVENT in the year-long celebration of this historic milestone will be a Eucharistic Liturgy on Sunday, September 20, 1992, at St. Paul Cathedral, Oakland at 3 p.m. Bishop Donald W. Wuerl will be the principal celebrant; Bishop John B. McDowell will be homilist. The solemn closing of the observance will be a Eucharistic Liturgy at Pittsburgh's Civic Arena on September 19, 1993. Bishop Wuerl will be celebrant and homilist.

A MAJOR EVENT will be built around a specific theme each month between the opening liturgy and July, 1993. Themes for 1992 include October, education; November higher education; and December, the multi-cultural church. In 1993 the themes are January, ecumenism; February, church music; March, social concerns; April religious life; May, health care; June, lay organizations; and July, special education.

† † † † † † †

Sesquicentennial History

Rebecca Mertz, author of the history of the Diocese of Pittsburgh has completed half the manuscript and expects to complete the project in time for the book to be available in September 1992. Venture Press was chosen to replace Duquesne University Press because the university press could not complete the project within the allowed time. Designer Robert Bowden has been assisting in the project since the summer of 1991. The history will be available in the fall.



The Historical Society

The Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania was founded on MAY 27, 1940. The Rev. Paul E. Campbell was president as the Catholic Historical Society celebrated the Centenary of the Diocese of Pittsburgh by publishing a collection of essays: Catholic Pittsburgh's One Hundred Years, 1843-1943. From its foundation in 1940 it has been the role of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania to gather the ongoing story of the Catholic Church in Western Pennsylvania and to share it through publications and programs open to the public.

On January 14, 1990 the Society discussed changes in its Constitution and after a second discussion on February 11, 1990, it adopted these changes and elected officers to two year terms. Dr. Jerome Janssen was elected president. At that time the Board of Directors consisted of eleven people, the mailing list included approximately thirty-five people. As we begin 1992, the mailing list has grown to three hundred fifty. Seventeen members serve on the Board.

Programs in 1991 focused on Social Concerns in observance of the 100th anniversary of Rerum Novarum. Bishop Malone of Youngstown, [September 22]; Father Cyprian Davis, OSB [April 14 -- Lambing Lecture]; and Msgr. Charles Owen Rice [March 3] gave presentations at Synod Hall. Bishop Malone's and Msgr. Rice's talks were video taped. On October 14, 1990 at Synod Hall Sister Cecilia Murphy, RSM spoke about Bishop Domenec, the second Bishop of Pittsburgh and only Bishop of Allegheny. On April 22, 1990 at Duquesne University, Father Henry A. Szarnicki gave a lecture on Bishop O'Connor, first Bishop of Pittsburgh.

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Gathered Fragments is intended to provide information about the history of the Diocese and Catholicism in Western Pennsylvania. Information about publications and events concerning the history of Catholicism will be published as space permits.

The Newsletter can be successful only if its readers provide information and articles. Frequency of its publication is dependent entirely upon your sending articles and news. Photographs, maps, and documents can be duplicated for publication, however, they can only be returned if you provide an envelope with postage.

If you have something for next issue, send to:

Dr. Joseph T. Makarewicz
2864 Ridge Road
Baden, PA 15005

869-9672, Home; 648-7420, Work; 648-1168, Fax.

Gathered Fragments is a publication of the Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. Dr. Joseph T. Makarewicz, Editor. The Newsletter is mailed to all members of the Society. Membership in the Society is \$5.00 a year. **1992 Membership dues are now payable.** Correspondence concerning the Society and Newsletter should be sent to Catholic Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 111 Boulevard of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222.